



“BUDDY SYSTEM” FOR HEAT WAVES

WHAT’S A BUDDY? Anyone can be a Buddy. A Buddy can be a friend, relative, neighbor, or landlord. A Buddy should be someone an elderly person who lives alone can trust in his or her home.

WHAT DOES A BUDDY DO? A Buddy makes a daily personal visit to his or her elderly Buddy during a heat wave. A Buddy encourages the elderly person to rest, stay cool, and drink plenty of fluids. If there are any errands that must be done, the Buddy does them, or makes sure they get done.

HOW TO HELP AN ELDERLY PERSON STAY COOL: Air conditioning is the best safeguard, but many elderly persons do not have air conditioning. If there is no air conditioning, all elderly persons should at least have open windows and an electric fan. Buddies make sure the elderly are wearing lightweight clothes appropriate for the heat, that they have water to drink, and that windows are open to provide ventilation. (Caution: If windows are kept closed and the room is very hot, using a fan can make the danger worse.)

If the temperature is very high, the elderly person should be taken, even if only for a few hours, to an air conditioned environment, such as a neighbor’s or relative’s air conditioned home, a movie theater, shopping mall, supermarket, senior citizen center, air conditioned library, or health facility. Call 277-4000 for information on City sponsored heat respite centers that may be open during periods of unusual heat.

Cool baths and showers are helpful.

HOW TO GET HELP: FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1. WATCH TV NEWS AND LISTEN TO RADIO NEWS FOR SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS DURING SEVERE HEAT WAVES

If it is not an emergency, but you are concerned about the elderly person’s well being, call his or her doctor.

Important telephone numbers for services:

American Red Cross	408-577-1100
Adult Protection Services	408-928-3860
City of San Jose Office on Aging	408-277-4561
Senior Companion Program	408-277-5606
Bay Area Legal Aid Services (tenant/landlord problems)	408-283-3700
CONTACT of Santa Clara County	408-279-8228
Council on Aging of Santa Clara County	
Visiting Service	408-296-8290
In-Home Support Services	408-928-3737
Legal Aid of Santa Clara County	408-998-5200
Poison Control Center	1-800-662-9886
San Jose Office of Emergency Services	408-277-4595
Santa Clara County Information & Referral Services, Inc.	408-345-4532
Suicide & Crisis Intervention, Santa Clara County Mental Health (24-Hr.)	408-279-3312

HEAT STRESS DANGERS

- WHAT:** Illness caused by a heat wave or other high heat conditions
- WHO:** Elderly persons
Persons with chronic medical conditions or other problems – such as:
 Heart or kidney failure Overweight or underweight
 Recent or past stroke Infection or fever
 High blood pressure Diarrhea
 Diabetes Drinking alcohol
 Reduced sweating Some medications
Small children
Persons working in high heat environments
Persons engaged in strenuous activity
- WHERE:** Outdoors – In sun
Indoors – Hot rooms OR any enclosed spaces, like automobiles
- WHEN:** Temperature – 90 degrees F. or higher
Humidity above 60% makes the body feel 10-20 degrees hotter!

EARLY WARNINGS SIGNS

Decreased energy
Slight loss of appetite
Faintness, light-headedness
Nausea

TREATMENT

Get person into cool environment
Give more fluids to drink (if awake & able)*
Remove excess clothing
Encourage rest

SERIOUS SIGNS

Unconscious or unresponsive
Rapid heartbeat
Throbbing headache
Dry skin (no sweating)
Chest pain
Mental confusion
Irritability/combativeness
Vomiting, diarrhea
Muscle cramps
Staggering
Difficulty breathing

TREATMENT

GET IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION

CALL 9-1-1!

While waiting for help:
- Move person to cool area
- Remove excess clothing
- Spray with water
- Fan the person

These are medical emergencies!
They may be life threatening!

Do not leave children, older persons, or pets alone in the car.

Drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic and decaffeinated fluids. Persons with chronic medical problems and persons regularly taking medication should consult with their physicians.

Do not take salt tablets unless directed by a physician

*Office of Emergency Services, 855 N. San Pedro, #404, San Jose, CA 95118-1718
(408.277.4595)*